

Hill to Probe Cambodia Story

United Press International

Sen. Stuart Symington, D-Mo., says the Senate Armed Services Committee will look into a Washington Star-News report that the United States is organizing a paramilitary operation in Cambodia similar to that run by the CIA in Laos for a number of years.

The report was filed from Svay Rieng, Cambodia, yesterday by Tammy Arbuckle, special correspondent of Thestar-News.

Arbuckle reported American personnel are staffing a program in the Cambodian countryside "with paramilitary overtones and the potential for a U.S.-run private army on the Laos model." He said the program is two months old and has 10 Americans stationed semi-permanently in Cambodian

province capitals working with local guerrilla teams.

The report said China Airlines, a private company, provides support for the American-directed paramilitary teams.

Symington, acting chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said he plans an investigation into the report "as soon as possible."

"It is difficult to understand why, at this late date in the Indochina war, and with the total end to direct United States involvement in the fighting only three weeks away, a decision of this character has been made with respect to our involvement in Cambodia," he said.

Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton, D-Mo., said today the administration is clearly violating the law if civilian advisers are, indeed, assigned to Cambodia.

Among specific provisions barring such actions enacted into law over the past few years, Eagleton said, is one added to a 1971 Foreign Aid Act prohibiting the use of appropriated funds for U.S. advisers "to or for Cambodia military forces in Cambodia."

"If these reports are true," he said, "they not only expose a discrepancy between word and deed, but a discrepancy between deed and law as well."

Diplomatic and congressional sources in Washington denied late yesterday that the Americans working in the Cambodian provinces are directing paramilitary operations. The sources said the CIA has established a new American spy network in Cambodia which is making reports to the U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh.

"Very frankly, they're spooks," one source said.

Sen. Harold E. Hughes, D-Iowa, also expressed concern about the report, commenting that it is time to put an end to these secret, unconstitutional wars."